

REPORT ON WSDOT SAFETY OVERSIGHT OF TACOMA LINK

BRIEFING PAPER

Prepared for the
August 2003 Transportation Commission Meeting

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PURPOSE:

To brief the Commission on WSDOT's safety oversight of Tacoma Link Light Rail.

ACTION/OUTCOME:

Information.

BACKGROUND:

Federal Transit Administration rules and State Law require WSDOT to provide safety oversight of rail transit systems in Washington State. The new Tacoma Link light rail line will begin revenue service on August 22nd. To ensure a safe and orderly transition from testing to revenue service, WSDOT is conducting a Pre-Passenger Service Safety and Security audit of Tacoma Link before revenue service begins.

DISCUSSION:

Transportation Resource Associates (TRA), a consultant firm that specializes in transit operations, management, security, planning, and safety, is conducting the Pre-Passenger Service Safety and Security audit under contract to WSDOT. Over the past several years, TRA has provided WSDOT safety oversight assistance with the Seattle Waterfront Streetcar and the Seattle Monorail triennial safety audits. TRA has also provided safety oversight services for Oregon, Utah, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Illinois, and Ohio.

Furthermore, Tacoma Link has submitted their system safety program plan to WSDOT for review and approval. Upon a favorable audit result, WSDOT can approve the Tacoma Link system safety program plan. WSDOT approval is required before Tacoma Link can begin revenue service.

TRA conducted an on-site audit of Tacoma Link the week of July 7th. This is the most critical component of the audit. Because of Sound Transit's emphasis on following the FTA safety certification process, no significant issues are expected. A brief summary of the preliminary on-site audit results will be presented at the commission meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

For further information, contact: Jeff Schultz, 705-7981.